

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARKS

CHUCK MUNZERT, CHAIRMAN

Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2019

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Tuesday, January 8, 2019, at 6:00 p.m., at Oregon Ridge Lodge, Cockeysville, Maryland. In attendance were Chuck Munzert, chairman, Greg Heitner, vice chairman; board members Mike Milani, Eric van den Beemt, Isaac Manjoe, Leslie Monfred, Skip Hammond, John Hawks and Chip Hiebler. Recreation and Parks department staff included Barry F. Williams, director and Bob Smith, chief, Recreation Services.

Call to Order:

Chairman Chuck Munzert called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Chip Hiebler motioned to approve the December board meeting minutes, vice chairman Greg Heitner seconded, and all were in favor.

Director's Comments:

Director Barry F. Williams reported that the new administration is very pro-recreation. Mr. Williams further stated that he is looking at opportunities to expand programs and obtain input from all stakeholders.

Old Business:

Mr. Hiebler previously stated that he wanted to work on standard operating procedures for recreation/nature councils, alongside Skip Hammond. He has been looking at this and compiling best practices. Board members have discussed best practices numerous times and like the idea of assembling, in a manual of sorts.

Regarding Bengies-Chase Recreation Council concerns, Mr. Munzert stated that this is pending in the Law Office.

Bob Smith reported that the Owings Mills Recreation Council concerns are currently with Adam Lippe. Leslie Monfred responded, stating that the last time she spoke to Mr. Lippe, he had not heard anything about this.

Regarding Liberty Road Recreation Council travel basketball, Isaac Manjoe reported that the council is working with auditors, preparing to send an engagement letter, and planning to move forward. Mr. Smith stated that there have been no permits issued to the travel basketball teams.

Ms. Monfred inquired about where things stand regarding reminders for when background checks are due. Mr. Williams replied, stating that a new contract is needed. The current contract does not permit email reminders. Mr. Williams stated that the Office of Information Technology holds the contract; however, he would look into this. Mike Milani stated that his employer does this, and he would send Mr. Williams their contract. Ms. Monfred inquired about what procedures were in place/what consequences there are, for those that do not

complete the background check. Mr. Munzert replied stating that the council could be put on hold if not in compliance. Ms. Monfred stated that there are a few councils in her district that have not ensured that all executive board members are in compliance. She reached out to them, but did not hear back. Discussion ensued. Councils are faced with the threat of decertification if they are non-compliant. Mr. Heitner stated that board members should reach out to those who are non-compliant, and if you do not hear back, then the council should be decertified.

Mr. Munzert addressed those in attendance regarding the Maryland Equine Resource Council (MERC) proposal. He stated that the board would conduct a silent vote, and Lisa Winters would tally. Eric van den Beemt opposed the secret vote, stating that people should know how their representatives vote. Mr. Munzert replied stating that the majority of board members said they wanted to vote this way. Mr. van den Beemt made a motion to vote differently. See item under "Action." Jeffrey Budnitz thanked board members for their time. Mr. Munzert stated that the board was going to look into this, further stating that he hopes both sides can come together. He expressed the need to figure out what is best for the community, and the facility. Mr. Munzert stated that this could change down the road, if not all programs are supported. Mr. Williams reported that he has spoken to the county executive, and is interested in doing a reboot of the facility. He would like stakeholders and representative of the community to come together in unity, wiping the slate clean. Mr. Williams stated that the goal is to make this work; getting input from everybody. He would like to meet at the Ag Center to discuss what works best for the Ag community.

Mr. Munzert reported that recertification documents would go out to all councils in January, with a due date of March 31. Board members agreed to include best practices with recertification information. Mr. Hiebler stated that he would send this information to board members tonight for review, and then forward to Ms. Winters. Mr. van den Beemt suggested all board members contact the councils in their district, in advance of receiving recertification documents. He suggested notifying the councils of the upcoming recertification, and directing them to pay particular interest to the background check piece. Mr. Milani reiterated again, that he does not believe the background check piece should be a function of volunteers, but rather paid staff. Ms. Monfred asked whether a volunteer could be held accountable for another volunteer not completing the background check. Mr. Williams replied, stating that he was not sure and would have to check with the Law Office. In addition, Mr. Williams referenced the transition report coming out in February, stating that all department heads were asked to submit goals. A paid staff position was added to the proposed work chart, to handle background checks.

Action:

Regarding the MERC proposal vote, Mr. van den Beemt motioned to announce your intention in public. Mr. Manjoe seconded the motion, Mr. Heitner and Mr. Hiebler opposed, and all others were in favor. Board members voted on the MERC proposal as follows: Mr. van den Beemt, Mr. Manjoe, Mr. Milani, Mr. Munzert, Mr. Hammond and John Hawks opposed; Mr. Heitner and Mr. Hiebler were in favor, and Ms. Monfred abstained.

Comments by Individual Citizens:

There were several people in attendance to hear the board's vote on the MERC proposal. Several took time to address the board. Their comments are as follows:

Andrew Gendron stated that he appreciates the board's vote tonight, acknowledging the open vote and consideration of this issue, and questioned Mr. Williams' term reboot with regard to the Ag Center. Mr. Williams replied, stating that there are many things going on at the Ag Center, but he does not know if it has reached its full potential. He would like to bring people together to discuss what is working and what is not, and how to better collaborate with the county and other folks.

Devra Kitterman thanked the board for their open vote. She stated that she is a volunteer with the Maryland Agricultural Resource Council (MARC) and agrees that things can always improve; however, she expressed concern regarding the attitude/atmosphere and questioned how this could be remedied. She is hopeful that the reboot can happen, and be transparent.

Regarding the vote tonight, Mike Gardner asked what the view is of the changes that have already been made. Mr. Williams stated, with regards to programming, this is what he is talking about when referencing a reboot. He would like to look at what is going on at the Ag Center. Mr. Gardner referenced a previous discussion about how much MERC has already taken at the Ag Center. He stated that he is concerned about the changes that have been made, and asked what would now happen. Mr. Williams replied, stating that this would be discussed with all stakeholders; tonight's vote was only on the MERC proposal. Mr. Williams offered those who have an interest to attend. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Milani stated that he thinks this will definitely be discussed again. He hopes this can become one organization, recognizing that it is a special type of facility, but hopes they can co-exist. Mr. Hawks replied, stating that he is a former MARC board member and noted that this group is strong and dedicated to their goals. He further stated that Mr. Williams is completely trustworthy, and they should not be worried.

Teresa Moore thanked board members for their attention and their public vote. She seconded Mr. Hawks' comments, and stated that she would like to be part of the reboot.

Mr. van den Beemt addressed those in attendance, identifying himself as Councilman Wade Kach's appointment. He stated that he met with Mr. Budnitz and Tom Whedbee to better understand the situation. He noted that Mr. Budnitz is not a bad person; he wants to do things to help the community, and gives his time and money for this. Mr. van den Beemt stated that they have heard the community, and the overwhelming response is to have MARC responsible for all aspects. However, Mr. van den Beemt stated that the only issue would be if they could not do this. Mr. Budnitz stated that he is a longtime volunteer, and although he may not agree with the decision, he respects it. He further stated that he cares and is happy to help; he is not trying to circumvent the system.

Bill Minor, MARC board member, stated that this is the first meeting he has attended. He said that he respects Mr. Williams and his open mind. He said they would love to work together to do what they can to offer courses to all of Baltimore County.

Ms. Monfred stated that in any kind of dispute, you could never make everyone happy. She commented on the job Mr. Budnitz has done as a volunteer in Baltimore County.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. van den Beemt moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Hammond seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Winters